

[Armstrong]

[15034?]

[Clockmakers?]

[?]

I had the good fortune today to come upon three of the old timers in one of their favorite hangouts—the Thomaston fire department headquarters. They were George Richmond (previously interviewed) William Armstrong who worked for Seth Thomas Clock Co. as a young man and Henry Odenwald, who also worked at the plant off and on during the course of his residence in Thomaston, alternating with work as a barber. Odenwald is German and Armstrong of Scotch parentage.

Looking fore more stories about Aaron, are you?" began Mr Richmond. "These fellows can probably tell you some". (But he kept right on talking without giving his cronies a chance to interrupt.) "Aaron used to own most of this land around here. Had two colored servants running it for him—only colored family in town—Finn [Mix?] and his wife. Their son Warren Mix lives down in Waterbury to this day.

"Aaron drove his horses into that old barn on Clay-street at eleven o'clock on the dot every day. He was as methodical as they come. Then at five minutes to twelve every day he'd be in his office to hear any complaints the help wanted to make. He was a fair and square too. If you had a legitimate complaint you'd get satisfaction every time. He was a stern man, but honest and fair.

Mr. Armstrong: "Yes, that's the God's truth. When we first came to this country my mother got a job at the Case shop. She'd only worked there a few months when times began to get bad, and Ed Thomas (that was old Aaron's son) he laid her off. Said if anybody had to go it would be some of those 'damn foreigners! Aaron came to our house when he heard

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about it, and asked her if she needed a job. She said she did, and he gave her a job doing housework. Then when times picked up he got [her?] back in the factory.”

Mr. Odenwald: “People used to kind of look up to him too. I remember when he was selectman and I had the barber shop in the town [?] building, he came to me one night and he says: [?] Henry, go [do?] 2 and see what you can do with “Pink” Wilson. He's roaring drunk and he's just chased everybody out of the post office.’

“So I went down—Pink and me always got along good together—and I says to him 'Now look here, Pink, the old man is upstairs and he's worried about you, afraid you're going to get into trouble.’

“‘Did he send you down after me?’ Pink says.

“Yes, I says, he did.”

“‘All right, Henry’ says Pink, ‘I’ll go home [?]’ and home he went.

Mr. Richmond; “I don't know if Aaron was selectman the time they had the bog row over the church property or not, but I know he was on the losin' side —for once—because I remember hearin' him argue at the meeting.

“The town wanted the church people to take down their spire when they built this here fire house, because it was planned to place this building about twenty feet farther down the street. You know the cemetery was here then, right where the town hall is and the fire house is now.

“So them that was arguin' for the town claimed the church spire stood on town property. Randall T Andrews—him that used to own the furniture store—he was a church trustee, and he says: “Gentlemen, I think you're going ahead with this without proper authority.

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Suppose you postpone action until a week from tonight and I may have some interesting figures here.

“At the next meeting Andrews got up—he'd been to Hartford looking up law—and looking up old land records—and he says: 'Gentlemen, it's generally agreed isn't it, that the cemetery is church property?

“Nobody disagreed with him, so he went on: ‘I find by consulting old records that the cemetery boundaries extend not only to the church, but right around to the rear of my store.’ (His store was south of the church.) So the church people won out.”